Syria or Mesopotamia in or about the seventh century. His famous medical treatise—the earliest experiment in this genre of literature which has survived in Hebrew—sums up the scientific outlook which prevailed at the period. Nevertheless, in one important point he strikes out for himself; for he is the first medical writer who seems to have had any inkling of the hereditary character of certain maladies.[1]

§n

After Asaf, the earliest of the great Jewish physicians in the classical tradition was Isaac Israeli of Kairouan, known to the European scholars as Isaac Judaeus. He was described by a Muslim contemporary as a man of the highest character who, though much occupied about Court, was indifferent to wealth and personal advancement. During the Middle Ages, he was one of the best-known of his profession, and his views on fevers in particular had the utmost influence. Like many another Jewish physician, he was also a philosopher, and as such, too, exercised great influence (already treated of in another connexion in this work). To Israeli belongs the credit of having introduced scientific medicine into Northern Africa; and his writings later exercised no small influence on mediaeval western medicine. His great composition translated into Latin by Constantine the African under the title *De Gradibus Simplicium* was one of the few early standard works on pharmacology, a main source and basis of most of the subsequent

mediaeval treatises on the same subject, and therefore of singular importance for the history of medicine.

[1] Noteworthy, too, *is* Asaf's treatise on the medicine of the poor, comprising remedies which required no outlay: for "he made his pupils take an oath that they would accept no fee for this work, but would attend the poor and needy free of charge, for the sake of charity."